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a index A LECTURE

UPON THE

Origin of Freemasonry;

TRACED FROM THE

Earliest known period up to the present Century.

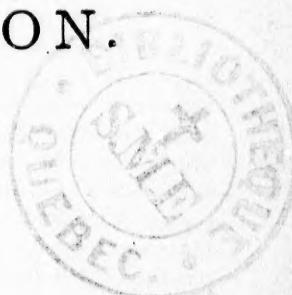
COLLECTED FROM AUTHENTIC RECORDS,

BY A FREEMASON.

A. L. 5871.

Montreal :

M D C C C L X X I.



INTRODUCTION.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The address which I shall have the honor to deliver to you this evening, is upon the origin and history of Freemasonry; tracing it from its earliest period up to the present century. I shall preface it by informing you that its contents lay no claim to originality; indeed they cannot do so, for they are merely a record of what has taken place from time to time, and the information therein contained has been obtained from various works of a most reliable character. My object in presenting it to you this evening is two-fold. First, there are many points of interest in it, with which even many Masons would hardly become acquainted in the ordinary course; secondly, because Freemasonry is not sufficiently understood outside the lodge, especially by the uninitiated. There are some who look upon Freemasonry entirely as a myth, and who think the order is MADE mysterious, only to serve certain outside ends and purposes. Others look upon it only as a social club from which no good can arise, and they regard it only as an institution for good fellowship and enjoyment. I do not for a moment wish to deny that it possesses these two latter qualifications; it would be unnatural if it did not, but these are not the grand objects of the order. The object of the science has a much higher ground, a much more noble aim. It is intended to make all those who enter within its portals, strictly honorable and virtuous; and whilst unfortunately some gain admittance who happen to be unworthy, hundreds, and I hope thousands are made better by its sublime and beautiful teachings.

As well might you exclaim that the whole world is bad (because some persons are found who violate the laws of God and man and render themselves unfit to be admitted into respectable society), as to condemn Freemasonry for the acts of SOME of its unworthy members. Freemasonry in itself is all that is good, sublime, and beautiful, it is the essence of religion, since it includes ALL religion; and I unhesitatingly affirm that he who is a good Mason, CANNOT fail to be a good man. Its principles are open to all; and at the close of my discourse I will give you from our Masonic lectures, a few illustrations of them. As to the secret signs and words which are necessary to exist amongst the fraternity, I will quote from a Masonic song the following lines:

“ The world is in pain our secrets to gain,
But still let them wonder and gaze on ;
Till they’re brought to light, they’ll ne’er know the right
Word or sign of an accepted Mason.”

Origin and Progress of Freemasonry.

THE origin of Freemasonry has been differently stated; some writers date it coeval with the world; whilst others, from a desire to injure its influences and deride its pretensions, represent it as an invention of certain ancient political parties in order to aid their projects. I shall now endeavour to show what may probably be considered its real origin, and that some of these apparently inconsistent accounts are not incompatible with each other.

It will be well to premise that an examination of the different system of religious mysteries throughout the world (so far as we are able to judge of them) must evince to the enquiring Mason that they all contain rites and ceremonies, emblems and symbols, bearing a great similarity to those used amongst us. I allude to this subject because one of our greatest Masonic scholars (the Rev. Dr. Oliver) has examined into this with much minuteness and ingenious research. He says: "The antiquity of Freemasonry may be deduced from the similarity of our rites to those of the mysteries; and we can only account for the resemblance which the ceremonies and doctrines of distant nations bear to each other by supposing that they were all derived from some great primitive system, which was practised when all mankind lived together as one family. It is morally impossible on any other principle that the same events perpetuated by the same ceremonies and symbols, and the same secret communications, could subsist in nations so widely separated as to preclude all possibility of intercourse with the inhabitants."

I shall not attempt to follow out the idea of Masonry having an antedeluvian existence; although it is highly probable that symbolical nations should have been instituted in memory of the penitence, reverence, sympathy, fatigue, and faith of the inhabitants of the world before

the flood. It is not, however, my present purpose to relate this part of the ancient history of the Order.

After the terrible instance of God's punishment by the deluge, and the families of the three sons of Noah having become numerous, it was necessary that they should separate and colonize the different countries appointed by God for their inheritance. The pious Father of the New World having received from his ancestors the principles of religious truth, communicated them to his descendants. It is from this source, then, we must trace the similarity in the religious systems of nations widely different in manners and far distant in habitation. But these pure doctrines soon became corrupted, for Nimrod, the rebellious son of Cush, endeavoured to remain in the land of Shinar instead of going to his appointed place, and there, with his followers, commenced building a tower of great height (intended for either the Zabian worship or for the study of astrology), there to establish an empire. But God frustrated these impious attempts, and caused such confusion in their language, as compelled them to separate and travel on in the world. And, now, without following the movements of any other nations, our concerns will be with the Egyptians, their Masonry, and the state of Masonry amongst the Hebrews.

In Egypt, then, the nearest country to the place of separation, and the country where the arts and sciences first began to flourish, where early traces of that mysterious society in which operative and speculative Masonry were combined. It was probably composed of operative Masons whose talents came into requisition for the building of religious places and edifices, and who, wishing to keep their scientific knowledge secret, used symbols amongst each other, and so sought to gain for themselves honor and admiration. But the Egyptian priesthood, a body of men of the highest rank, and desirous of ruling the people by superstition, were soon led to join the society for the purpose of participating in the scientific information possessed by its members. The principal buildings erected being of a religious character, gave them a just plea for joining the architects; and giving a religious appearance to their order, they connected their philosophy and mythology with the avowed objects of the associate; hence arose that union of science and theology

found in Freemasonry. The knowledge thus possessed they concealed from the vulgar, by veiling their acts in heiroglyphics and symbols; and they admitted none to participate in their mysteries unless they passed through an ordeal of a most trying nature. The aspirant was subjected to all the horrors of mind and body, before he could be admitted for initiation, by means of peculiar mechanism invented by these conservators of the secrets. If the candidate was enabled to pass through this ordeal, he was admitted, and gradually instructed in the doctrines which they taught, of the creation of the world and the nature of the soul, but was not admitted to the higher degrees until he was compelled to undergo that ceremony which alludes to the loss of one of the greatest and most expert Masons that ever existed. Many offered themselves for initiation into these Egyptian mysteries, and many failed to go through the ordeal required, for which, by the law of the Mytagogues, they were confined for life. The system spread widely, and traveled into Greece, whither, when the population increased to an extent to induce emigration, they traveled under different leaders, each carrying with them the knowledge of the mysteries. The principals of these were Inachus, Cecrops, Cadmus, and Danaus, about 1600 years before the Christian Era. Triptolimus, the son of Celeus, King of Eleusis, being desirous of knowledge, visited Egypt, and sought to be admitted into the mysteries of Isis; he became an aspirant, but being unable to pass the required ordeal, he was condemned never more to behold the light of day. He endured this punishment with great fortitude for a long time, and the priests, admiring his courage and desire for scientific acquirements took pity on him, and admitted him to a second trial, when he fully succeeded in being initiated; and, grateful for the kindness shown him, on his return to Greece he built a temple to Ceres, taught and encouraged agriculture, promoted science, and established the Eleusinian mysteries on the model of those in which he had been instructed. The similarity of these rites to those of our Order have been proved by many who have inquired into them; inasmuch as the candidates were required to be of a certain age, their characters strictly scrutinized, and persons of bad repute were rejected; the candidates were prepared by certain officers, and then bound by solemn obligations

to preserve the secrets of the Order, when, by good conduct and study, they were raised to higher degrees; three officers governed them. The Dionysians then came, and soon spread over a great part of Asia. These Masons erected the most superb edifices, far surpassing any yet seen; they wore jewels similar to ours, and used signs and symbols to recognize each other; they were well known in Egypt, settled in Syria, and brought from Persia specimens of that style which we now call Grecian.

Having thus far traced the progress of the Mysteries amongst the Idolators, Egyptians, and Greeks, I will now proceed to the other great branch of Freemasonry as practiced by the Hebrews. If the Heathens excelled as operative Masons in the science of Architecture, the true believers were not inferior to them in the pure light of speculative Masonry as practiced by the Jewish nation, and from whom we may claim much of our knowledge of the science. With slight reference to Abraham, who, by complying with the will of God in offering his son Isaac, made the first grand offering on record; and of the injunction laid upon Jacob after having fraudulently obtained the blessing intended for Esau, to go to Mesopotamia to take a wife from the family of Laban, and of the favor shown to his son Joseph by inducing Pharaoh to make him second man in Egypt, in which high position he remained until another king commenced to reign, who, not knowing Joseph, began to oppress the people, when God prepared a preserver in the person of Moses, to whom He communicated the knowledge of that name which expresses His eternal attributes, and under whose guidance He delivered His people Israel out of bondage, with a high hand and an outstretched arm; and they being the chosen people, the Almighty thought fit to reveal to them those three excellent institutions, the moral, ceremonial, and judicial law; having called Moses into the Mount, He showed him the model on which the Tabernacle was to be formed, which was afterwards erected in the Wilderness. Under him Joshua fought the battles of the Lord in the Valley of Jehosaphat; and amongst the Elders, who outlived Joshua, Masonry flourished in its purity.

We must now pass over a series of years, in which the Jews were punished for their disobedience, and come to David, who was

established King in Jerusalem in the thirty-eighth year of his age, 1048 years before the Christian Era. Shortly afterwards he made friends with Hiram, King of Tyre, Grand Master of Masons in that part of the world; these Masons were renowned for their skill and the beauty of their workmanship; this Prince sent timber and men. A palace was then built for David, but considering it a deficiency in his duty and devotion to God that he should live in a palace of cedar whilst the ark was merely in the curtain of the Tabernacle, he proposed to Nathan, the prophet, to build a house to be dedicated to the Most High. Nathan was, however, inspired to inform him, that in consequence of his being a man of war and having defiled his hands with blood, that he could not accomplish such an object. In the year 1017, David was unfortunately tempted to have the people numbered, which being accounted a sin in the eyes of the Almighty, a pestilence raged among them and destroyed a great number. David, to appease the wrath of God, offered many prayers and burnt offerings, which stayed the hand of the destroying angel. This is the second grand offering which Free Masons commemorated.

David died two years afterwards, and his son, Solomon, succeeded him; immediately on ascending the throne, he sent messages to Hiram, requesting him to supply him with timber and stone to erect a temple to the living God. Hiram at once acceded to this request, and also sent a man cunning in the works of gold and silver, in brass, in iron, in purple, and in crimson; this great man was Hiram Abiff, the son of a widow of Tyre. Solomon immediately appointed him Deputy Grand Master (under himself) of the Masons employed in the building. The system these two great men adopted is well worthy of notice. To prevent confusion, owing to the great number of men employed, they divided them into three classes, according to the degree of professional knowledge possessed by each. The first was the class of apprentices, the second of fellow-crafts, and the third masters. Each class had particular signs and words entrusted to them; were also divided into lodges of 80 men each, including a Master and two Wardens. They were divided as follows:

Harodin, Princes or Rulers.....	300
Master Masons.....	3,300
Onshy Chotzib, or Sculptors, or Hewers of Stone.....	80,000
The Levy out of Israel, who worked one month in three, at 10,000 a month.....	30,000
Total number employed.....	113,600

not including the men of burden, amounting to 70,000. The old Canaanites were not reckoned, being literally slaves to the workmen. They were engaged three years in preparing the materials in the quarries, and were 750 lodges, amounting together to 60,000 men, including Masters and Wardens.

In the forest of Lebanon were 420 lodges, amounting to 33,600; thus the entire number constantly employed was 93,600. There were always 20,000 at rest. Everything was prepared with the greatest nicety, conveyed on rafts to Joppa, thence to Jerusalem, and then fitted together, according to the plan of the architect, in the 4th year of the reign of King Solomon, who, about the end of April, in the year of 1012, B. C., laid the foundation of the Temple on Mount Moriah. There was not a tool of iron used in its construction, there being a peculiar objection to the use of metal tools on the occasion.

In the year 1015, B. C. the Temple was finished,—about the end of October, on the day of the new year according to the Jewish Calendar. About September, in the next year, the people assembled at one of the most solemn religious meetings that ever took place, it being the dedication of the first Temple erected in honor of the true and living God. It was then that the third grand offering took place on the same spot already hallowed by the offerings of Abraham and David, before alluded to, and which are all commemorated by Freemasons of the present day.

The history of the building, completion, and dedication of the Temple has been explained, without interruption, and without reference to a circumstance of the deepest interest to Freemasons; which happened previous to the cape stone of the building being celebrated. To this event no more than allusion can be made; it produced at the time an expression of the deepest sorrow upon the brethren, and which must ever be indelibly impressed on the mind of every Master Mason.

The consequence of this *loss* was an alteration in the structure of the society, which exists to this day, and the system underwent some change under the command of King Solomon, who, being acquainted with the most famous systems of mysteries, was enabled to form an improvement on the system of Masonic discipline; and from this point our present system of Freemasonry is to be dated.

Such is a brief outline of that beautiful system, which then established, has since been the admiration of the world, and has stood the test of ages amid every persecution.

But the death of the King, however, soon upset all the good he had taught, and the revolt of the ten tribes brought down the anger of God; the horrid mysteries devoted to Tammus or Adonis, and acts of the grossest impiety caused the vengeance of the Lord to fall upon his people; and the result was that they were carried away into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, in the year 606, B. C.

This long threatened punishment of the Jews had a salutary effect upon other nations, and continued to spread true notions of God, and to disseminate more perfect Masonry among the heathens.

Four years before the Babylonish captivity began, Ichohez, King of Judah, was carried captive into Egypt by Pharaoh Necho. At this time Thales of Miletus was in that country in search of knowledge. Struck by the remarkable history of the Jews, he made inquiry concerning their doctrines; from them he acquired more just notions than he before entertained; he returned to Miletus and founded the Ionic sect, being the first Greek who taught the first system of philosophy. He taught that the world was not eternal, but made by God out of water, and that it was infinitely grand and perfect; and that it was filled by spirits who minister to the welfare of man.

But one more extraordinary even than Thales, undoubtedly received from the Jews the elements of philosophy: this was Pythagoras; he travelled to Palestine and Syria in search of wisdom and truth; thence he went to Egypt, and remained there twenty-two years. He was admitted into all the mysteries proclaimed by the Egyptian priests; he met there with some of the Jews, who, with Jeremiah, had fled from Jerusalem, and he desired to know more of the doctrines, of which he

had obtained only an insight; for this purpose he went to Babylon, where he became acquainted with Daniel, whom Darius appointed Grand Master of Masons in the Persian Dominions. By Daniel the Samian philosopher was initiated into pure Freemasonry; and pleased with the system under which the lodges in that country worked, he determined to establish a similar society at home; but on his return to Samos, being distressed with the state of political affairs in that island, he settled in Crotona, in Magna Græcia, in the south of Italy, where he established a lodge, and called it the Italic school. Here he taught the eternal essence and unity of the Creator of the world, and acknowledged only *One*, and described that in the same word as the Jews do, signifying "self-existent."

He taught doctrines of a peculiar Providence, of the immortality of the soul, and incorporeality of the Deity; and his mode of teaching by signs and symbols leaves no room to doubt the connection of his system with Freemasonry.

We now return to the Jews. Their seventy years of captivity having expired and the anger of God being appeased, he stirred up the heart of Cyrus, King of Persia, who issued this proclamation: "The Lord God of "heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judea. "Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and "let him go up to Jerusalem and build the house of the Lord God of "Israel." (EZRA. Chap 1. v. 2. 3.)

In conformity with this injunction, the Jews left Babylon with Zerubbabal, the lineal heir to one of the princely houses of Judah, attended by Jeshua the high priest, Haggai the Prophet, and Ezra the Scribe, and returned to their own land. The work then proceeded by the direction of Cyrus, and in the beginning of the following year the foundation of the second Temple was laid by Zerubbabal, the Grand Master of Masons, and Jeshua, his Senior Warden, amidst great rejoicings and praises to God. But some of those who remembered the glory of the former temple could not refrain from shedding tears, "so "that the shout of joy could not be discerned from the noise of weeping." But previous to the foundation stone being laid, a great

discovery was made, which gave unmixed joy to the Grand Master and his Masonic Brethren, by the reparation of a loss which had been seriously deplored for upwards of 500 years. It is impossible here to explain what that loss was, the reparation of which gave so much joy to the people, and filled them with gratitude to the Almighty. The "seed sown in tears was reaped in joy;" and an important addition was made to the order in consequence of this happy discovery.

But the malignity shewn against the Jews prevented the intentions of Cyrus being carried out this time: the building was stopped for 15 years, and until the 2nd year of King Darius. Haggai, the prophet, now rose by command of God, and severely rebuked the Jews for ceasing from their good work, and for permitting the temple of God to lie waste, whilst they themselves were "dwelling in ceiled houses" he threatened them with the wrath of the Almighty, if they continued their neglect, and comforted those who wept at the apparent difference between the two temples, by assuring them that God could if he chose make this one as splendid as the former, "for the silver and the gold were His." By his exhortations, assisted by the prophecies of Zechariah, the work was recommenced, and Darius issued mandates forbidding any interruptions to the work; and within five years from its original commencement the temple was completed and dedicated. We know but little of the order from this time until after the establishment of the Christian religion.

In Britain we are informed that St. Austin, with 40 more monks, amongst whom the science was preserved, encouraged a number of trading architects, who were travelling over Europe and were recommended by the See of Rome. The difficulty of getting expert workmen for the many buildings being raised at that time for the honor of religion, made it prudent to encourage this body of men. Accordingly they were allowed to have their own government; they were under regular command, divided into lodges, with Master and Wardens to each, and dwelt in encampments near the buildings they were employed to erect.

By them the old Cathedral at Canterbury, was built in the year 600; St. Paul's, at London, in 604, and St. Peter's, at Westminster, in 605,

besides many other places of note. In the year 680, some expert Masons from France were formed into a lodge under the direction of Bennett, Abbott of Wirral, who was appointed Superintendent of Masons by Kinsed, King of Mercia. We now come to St. Swithin, who was made Superintendent by Ethlewolf, from which time the order gradually improved, until the year 872, when King Alfred took the command of it. Then Edwin applied and procured from his brother, Athelstan, a Charter for the Masons, to enable them to form into a society, and to hold lodges; in accordance with which the first grand lodge in England met at York, in the year 926. From this time to 960, we know little of the fraternity, except that they were governed by Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, and by Edward the Confessor, in 1041; and so on it was governed by the succeeding Kings of England. From the year 1155 until 1199 the fraternity was under the command of the Knights Templars.

This being the first opportunity of mentioning this peculiar order, I shall merely state that it was founded upon military authority, and at the instigation of some monks, for the purpose of protecting Christian pilgrims who visited the Holy City. Masonry continued to flourish under the several Kings until the reign of Henry the Sixth, when an Act of Parliament was passed forbidding the meetings of the society. This was caused by the enmity of Bishop Beaufort towards Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the King's Uncle, who was a great patron of the craft: but this Act was never enforced,—the King himself being initiated, he patronized the society.

But few circumstances have occurred since that time up to the present which call for any special remark; suffice it to say, that the Order has, in all countries in Europe, been patronized and supported by the most eminent and worthy men; and although at times interruptions may have taken place in the purity of its principles and intentions, still, let us remember that the fundamental principles of the Order of Freemasonry never can be affected by the individual conduct of man. Objections may be raised to any special Lodge, or any particular brother, and feelings other than those of Brotherly Love may sometimes be engendered; but we must recollect that we are but men, liable to be

affected by circumstances and position, and therefore liable to error; but at the same time do no forget that "to err is human," that the great God who searches all hearts can alone reward or punish, as we obey or disregard His divine commands; therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Order must not be condemned on account of the man, but let the attributes of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth be practiced, and you must then appreciate the excellencies of that Order, which is characterised by the pure principles of Truth, Honor and Mercy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have now concluded the subject announced for the lecture—we shall presently be favored with some more music by the members of the choir of St. Lawrence Lodge, to whom I hereby tender my thanks for their kind and pleasing assistance this evening. I told you in my introduction that there are some beautiful principles which I would illustrate, and I will therefore claim your kind attention for a few minutes longer, whilst I select a few of them. Prominent amongst Masonic virtues are FAITH, HOPE, and CHARITY. FAITH is the foundation of justice, the bond of amity, and the chief support of civil society. We live and walk by Faith; by it we have a hope and acknowledgement in the existence of a Supreme Being, are justified, accepted and finally received. A true and sincere faith is the evidence of things not seen, but the substance of those hoped for; this well maintained and answered, by walking according to our Masonic profession, will bring us to those blessed mansions where we shall be eternally happy with God, the great ruler of the universe. HOPE is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and enters into that within the veil. Then let a firm reliance on the Almighty's faithfulness animate our endeavours, and teach us to fix our desires within the limits of His most blessed promises. So shall success attend us. If we believe a thing to be impossible, our despondency is capable of rendering it so; but he who perseveres in a just cause will ultimately overcome all difficulties. CHARITY—ever lovely in itself—is one of the brightest gems that can adorn our Masonic profession; it is the best test and surest proof of the sincerity of our religion. Benevolence, attended by heaven-born charity, is an honor to a nation whence it springs, is nourished, and cherished. Happy is the man who has sown in his breast the seeds of benevolence,—he

envies not his neighbour, — he believes not a tale when told by a slanderer,—malice or revenge having no place in his breast, he forgives the injuries of men, and endeavors to blot them out from his recollection. Then let us remember that we are brethren, ever ready to listen to him who craves our assistance, and from him who is in want let us not withhold a liberal hand. So shall a heartfelt satisfaction reward our labors, and the produce of love and charity will most assuredly follow.

Next on our list come BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF and TRUTH, and are thus illustrated :

BROTHERLY LOVE—By the exercise of brotherly love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family,—the high and the low, the rich and the poor,—all created by the same Almighty parent, and sent into the world for the mutual aid, support, and protection of each other. On this grand principle Masonry unites men of every country, sect, and opinion, and thereby cultivates a true and sincere friendship amongst those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.

RELIEF—To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on every man, particularly us as Freemasons, who ought to be linked together by one indissoluble bond of sincere affection and brotherly love. Hence, to sooth the unhappy, sympathise with their misfortunes, compassionate their miseries, and restore peace to their troubled and agitated minds, is the first aim we should have in view;—on this basis we form our connexion and establish our friendship as Masons.

TRUTH is a divine attribute, and the foundation of every Masonic virtue; to be good and true is the first lesson we are taught at our initiation. On this grand principle hypocrisy and deceit should be unknown amongst us. Sincerity and plain dealing are our distinguishing characteristics, whilst the heart and tongue join in promoting each other's welfare, and rejoice at the prosperity of the Craft.

Faith, Hope, and Charity, Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, have thus been illustrated; there are three others which deserve special attention, which are VIRTUE, HONOR, and MERCY.

In perusing the records of ancient Rome, we find that the Consul

Marcellus intended to erect a temple to be dedicated both to virtue and honor ; but being at that time prevented from carrying his scheme into execution, he afterwards altered his plan, and erected two temples, so situated, that the only avenue to the temple of honor was through that of virtue ; thereby leaving an elegant moral to posterity, that the only direct road to honor must be through that of virtue. Virtue is the highest exercise and improvement of reason,—the integrity, harmony, and just balance of affection,—the health, strength, and beauty of the soul. The perfection of virtue is to give reason (that noble faculty), its full scope,—to obey the dictates of conscience with alacrity, to exercise the defensive talents with fortitude, the public with justice, the private with temperance, and the whole of them with prudence ; that is, in a due proportion with each other,—with a calm and diffusive benevolence, to love and adore God with an unrivalled and disinterested affection, and to acquiesce in all the dispensations of Divine Providence with a cheerful resignation.

HONOR is the most manly and dignified sentiment or impulse of the soul which virtue can inspire. The actions of all good men are regulated by honor, inasmuch as it renders unnecessary the forms that are found requisite to bind those who are destitute of this refined principle. It is also the highest incentive to the performance of the most heroic and disinterested actions, as it implies the united sentiments of faith, truth, and justice, carried by an enlightened mind far beyond those obligations which the laws of the land require, or can punish the violation of. Honor, although a different principle from religion, is that which produces the same effects, for the lines of action, although differently drawn, terminate in the same point. RELIGION embraces virtue as it is enjoined by the laws of God ; HONOR as it is graceful and ornamental to human nature. The religious man FEARS, but the man of honor SCORNS to do an ill act ; the one considering vice as beneath him, the other as offensive to the Deity ; the one as unbecoming, the other as forbidden. Thus honor may justly be deemed the noblest branch that can spring from the glorious stock of virtue ; for a man of honor will not content himself with a literal discharge of his duty as a man and a citizen, but he exalts and dignifies it to magnanimity ; he gives, where

he might with propriety refuse; and forgives, where he might with strict justice resent. Thus, virtue and honor united, have hitherto been, and, I trust, will ever continue to be, a distinguishing characteristic of every Freemason.

MERCY is a refined virtue, held sacred by all good minds. If possessed by the Monarch, it adds brilliancy to every gem that adorns his crown, it gives glory to his Ministers, and an unceasing freshness to the wreath which decks the warrior's brow; it is the companion of true honor, and the ameliorator of justice, on whose bench when enthroned, she interposes a shield of defence. As the vernal showers descend from heaven to enliven and invigorate the whole vegetable system, so mercy, resting on the heart of man when its vital fluids are condensed by rancour and revenge, by its exhilarating warmth, returns perverse nature to its original source in purer streams. It is the chief attribute of the Deity, on whom the best and wisest of us must rest his hopes and dependence, and it is a duty we even owe to our enemies. To shew mercy and forgiveness is highly pleasing in the sight of our great Creator, who has said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," not only in this transitory life, but at the final day of retribution when summoned to His tribunal, and the actions of our mortal lives are unfolded to view; although justice may demand the fiat, we hope His mercy will avert the awful doom.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I thank you for your polite attention to my address, which, I hope, has not been entirely uninteresting. I am sure it cannot have lessened Freemasonry in your estimation; and if there be any present who previously have not thought well of it, I hope they will henceforth be convinced that its true principles are virtue and goodness in their fullest extent.

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